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"the primeval sagas" of the Fall, of Noah, &c., "the traditions of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of Joseph."

Dr. Elliott hopes that his "treatise may prove useful to ministers and students of the Bible who have not access to strictly critical and exhaustive treatises on the Pentateuch." He frankly and fairly states "the various theories of the composition and authorship of the Pentateuch," "the arguments urged in favor of the various hypotheses," "the expositions and theories which assign the Pentateuch to a later date than the time of Moses," and finally the proofs of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch both internal and external. Two hundred pages are given to the various theories and thirty to the evidence in favor of the Mosaic authorship, so that no one can deny that he means to give a full statement of the views of his opponents.

Mr. Newton's literary style is far more polished and elegant than that of Dr. Elliott. His book is pleasanter reading. The latter is strictly argumentative, and betrays the professorial manner. It demands study. There is a vagueness and extravagance in the statements of the former, and a slightly apologetic tone in the explanations of the latter, which are unpleasant and fairly open to criticism. The two books will act as a kind of antidote to each other, and we earnestly hope that none will take sides with Mr. Newton before they have read and mastered Dr. Elliott's vindication of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.*

This volume covers the Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings. In the case of each book there are furnished an Introduction, a Translation, and Notes. Each feature of the volume deserves separate notice.

In the *Introduction* one section is devoted to "the value of these books as a part of divine revelation;" a second to the "grounds for the extermination of the idolatrous races;" and five sections to the composition, authorship, sources and dates of these books.

The value of these books, as containing most excellent homiletical material, is clearly and forcibly brought out. The grounds of the extermination of the idolatrous races are "sought (1) in the purpose of God in giving this land to Abraham and his descendants; (2) in the character of the inhabitants, and in the obstacles it opposed to the attainment of that end." A vivid description is given of the debasing, corrupt, and licentious worship which confronted the Israelites when they came to take possession of the land given to them by divine authority.

The book of Joshua was written by an eye-witness and actor in the scenes narrated, or compiled from contemporaneous documents. The most natural supposition is that Joshua himself was its author, or that it was prepared under his direction. The Book of Judges, irregular in structure, not a consecutive narrative, rather a series of chronicles, is thoroughly historical. It was compiled in the times of Samuel from contemporaneous records of the events narrated. The date of Ruth is uncertain. The Books of Samuel are authentic history, drawn

* THE BOOKS OF JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH, 1 AND 2 SAMUEL, 1 AND 2 KINGS. The common version, revised, with an introduction and occasional notes. By Thomas J. Conant. Pp. xxv., 328. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society. Price \$2.00, postpaid. For sale by F. G. Thearle, 151 Wabash Avenue, Chicago.

from original and contemporaneous documents. The same is true of the Books of Kings, which were probably composed by Jeremiah.

As a matter of fact, it is to be doubted whether Dr. Conant has said anything in this Introduction, which will be of any particular help to a Bible student. It contains only a statement, in the briefest possible form, of the old, traditional views; and why should the work of biblical scholars for half a century be entirely ignored? One cannot, in justice to himself or to his subject, thus pass by without a word the views of so large a proportion of modern writers. These modern views may be, and, to a large extent, doubtless are, as yet unestablished. They are, however, so important, and the principles on which they rest are so vital, that they certainly deserve some attention at the hand of one who places before himself the task of treating these subjects.

Dr. Conant's strong point is his ability as a translator. Has he his equal anywhere? It will certainly be an interesting work, when the Revised Old Testament appears, to compare with it this work, and to note in how many cases the corrections of the Revisers have been anticipated. The variations from the authorized version are not so many as might have been expected. After all, which is to be preferred, a revision, or a new translation? If Dr. Conant has erred, it has been in adhering too closely to the Authorized Version. It is to be remembered of course that in these historical books our translation is much more perfect than in the poetical and prophetic portions. One cannot compare Deborah's Song, Judges v., Hannah's Prayer, 1 Sam. ii., or The Song of the Bow, 2 Sam. i., as they are rendered and printed in the volume before us, with the form in which they stand in the A. V. without noticing a marked improvement. It is in such passages that the differences are more easily seen. To many it may seem not worth while for a translation, such as this, to be published, when the Revision is so soon to appear. This is a wrong idea. Does anyone suppose that there will ever come a time, when it may be said: "It is no longer necessary to revise the Old Testament; no additional changes worthy of consideration can be suggested." So long as it is worth while to study the Old Testament, so long as there is additional information to be gained, there will be time and occasion for improvement in the translation of it. Let scholars vie with each other in this work. There is no more noble, no more important work. Let no translation, ever yet made, or ever to be made, be regarded as a final one.

The "notes" in the volume are excellent, as far as they go. But where there is *one* note, there ought to be *ten*. Dr. Conant's ability as a translator is only greater than his ability as an exegete. It is a matter of surprise and of regret that he did not throw more light upon obscure places. The note on Jephthah's daughter, while clear and plausible, presents, we believe, the wrong view. If the language of the narrative does not imply that she was offered as a sacrifice, it has no meaning. The standing still of the sun on Gibeon, and of the moon in the valley of Aijalon is, correctly, regarded as a poetical description of a plain matter of fact. The whole passage is a quotation from an ancient book. When the value of the notes given is considered, the regret becomes all the keener that the author did not choose to insert many more.

Although the Introduction is one-sided, the revision too conservative, and the notes too meagre, the work as a whole is worthy of the eminent scholar and exegete, who is its author. It may be doubted whether any one

man in our country has done more for a faithful rendering into English of God's word than Dr. Conant.

CURRENT DISCUSSIONS IN THEOLOGY. VOL. II*

The first volume of this "Annual Theological Review" appeared a year ago. This, the second volume, is, in many respects superior to its predecessor. The aim of the Professors of the Chicago Theological Seminary is "to furnish an annual digest of theological thought and investigation." They do not pretend to furnish exhaustive discussions of the subjects taken up; but rather to present for the information of general readers a statement of the questions at issue. Certainly there can be found nowhere a more commendable enterprise than that which has resulted in the issue of the "Annual Theological Review."

We are specially interested in that portion of the book written by Prof. S. Ives Curtiss. In Vol. I. the state of Old Testament studies in exegesis and introduction was considered. In this volume the field of Old Testament history is covered; while in Vol. III. the department of Old Testament Theology will be treated.

Old Testament History, says the writer, is not simply the vestibule to Church History. Nor on the other hand is it right to place in a separate department Old and New Testament history. So difficult are the questions which come up in both that they cannot well be combined. "None but Old Testament scholars are, in Germany, now considered competent to treat of Israel's history."

The department of the Old Testament is treated in five chapters: (1) Modern Treatment of Israel's History; (2) Place and time; (3) The Origin of the Nation; (4) The Training of the Nation; (5) Israel's Conquest of Canaan. The first chapter, being fundamental, is the most interesting of the five. Here, first, we are given a list of so-called *Critical Presuppositions*. Ultra-critics do their work on the presupposition (1) that "Israel's history in its origin is subject to the same laws as those of other nations of antiquity;" (2) that the events described in the early chapters of Genesis correspond and are similar in character to the stories of gods and heroes found in the early records of other nations; (3) that Israel's laws and institutions, like those of other nations, must have developed gradually; (4) that Oriental records must be interpreted according to the peculiarities of Oriental people.

A clear statement is made of the method adopted by these ultra-critics in the handling of the sources of information, the result of the employment of this method being to deny that Moses is the author of any part of the Pentateuch, to regard the Biblical order of the events as entirely wrong, and to endeavor to reconstruct everything on the basis of the critical discoveries *claimed* to have been made.

The character of Ewald, Wellhausen, Stade, Kuenen as historians is next discussed, and a brief presentation made of their several views. The chapter closes with Prof. Curtiss' *Criticisms on the Critical Method*, in which he asserts (1) that the mythical nature of the early Hebrew records is not to be inferred, after the analogy of the early records of other nations, because in them God is represented as an immediate factor; (2) that the Mosaic system did not grow up gradually, the claim that it did so grow up resting, he says, "upon two unproved assumptions:

* CURRENT DISCUSSIONS IN THEOLOGY. By the Professors of Chicago Theological Seminary. Vol. II. Chicago: F. H. Revell. Pp. 324. Price \$1.50.